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# Introduction to Cultural Safety

MHCC Vancouver Training



## Cultural Safety: Agenda

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- Why Cultural Safety
- What is Cultural Safety
- How was it defined
- Historical origins
- How can we use the concept
- Culturally safe Organizations
- Culturally safe Healing
- Groups discussion questions



## Cultural Safety: Concepts

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### What is Culture?

- “Shared patterns of learned behaviour and values that are transmitted over time, and that distinguish the members of any one group from another. “
- “Can include: ethnicity, language, religion and spiritual beliefs, gender, socioeconomic class, age, sexual orientation, group history, education, upbringing and life experience. “

Canadian Nurses Association (2004)



## Cultural Safety: Concepts

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### **Cultural Awareness**

- It involves observing people's different activities and how they go about doing them.
- It does not involve the political, social and economic characteristics of difference nor does it involve examining one experiences or relationship difference

Gregory, (2005)



## Cultural Safety: Concepts

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### **Cultural Sensitivity**

- Cultural safety is expressed through behaviors that are considered polite and respectful by others.

Giger et al, (2007)



## Cultural Safety: Concepts

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### **Cultural Competence**

- Involves the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary for providing quality care for diverse populations.

Mc Naughton-Dunn (2002)



## Cultural Safety: Definition

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### **Cultural Unsafe**

“occurs when actions diminish, demean and disempowered the cultural identity and well being of an individual. “

Nursing Council of New Zealand



## Cultural Safety: Definition

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### **Cultural Safety Definition**

- It is the interaction between two individuals from two different cultures

*“more or less - an environment, which is safe for people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what, they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning together with dignity, and truly listening.”*





## Cultural Safety: Elements

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### **Cultural safety**

*“enables safe service to be defined by those who receive the service.”*

*And*

*“it is about knowing your own culture, privilege, social location and being aware of how relationships intersect and how inequities may result from these interactions.”*

(Cultural Safety: Module Three – Peoples Experiences in relation to Health Care)



## Cultural Safety: Origins

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- Concept first developed in New Zealand
- Recognizes the historical impacts on the individual

“ A cultural attitude to history needs to be taken into account when working within a cultural framework”

Irihapeti Ramsden



## Cultural Safety: Other fields of human services

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- Spread to other areas of the world, particularly with Indigenous Peoples who have experienced colonization



## Cultural Safety: Affects of Colonization

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### **The loss and destruction of:**

- traditional identity, spirituality, language and culture through government policies.
- traditional economies through expropriation of traditional lands and resources.
- indigenous forms of governance and community organization and cohesion.
- Healthy patterns of individual, family and community life.



## Cultural safety: Using the Concept

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### **Culturally unsafe care**

- Difference in values, ethics and knowledge
- Negative portrayal of indigenous peoples
- Does not recognize historical trauma and effects of colonization
- Basic access barriers



## Culturally Safety: Organizations

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### **Culturally Competent Organizations**

- Requires a set of values, principles and structures to work cross-culturally
- Works within the cultural context of the community in which it serves
- A work in progress of policy making, administration, practice and service delivery
- Involves clients, families and communities
- Recognizing individuals and organizations will be at various levels of awareness, knowledge and skills.



## Cultural Safety: Safe Healing

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- **Elements of Culturally safe practices:**
- Build trust with clients to start treatment or their path to healing
- Clients rights can be articulated – i.e. ask the client what they need for ongoing treatment
- Create a comfortable space that feels safe
- Reinforce safety: They are not alone and there will be resources available to them to assist in their journey
- Identify a safe therapeutic process that will meet the needs of the client and the service provider

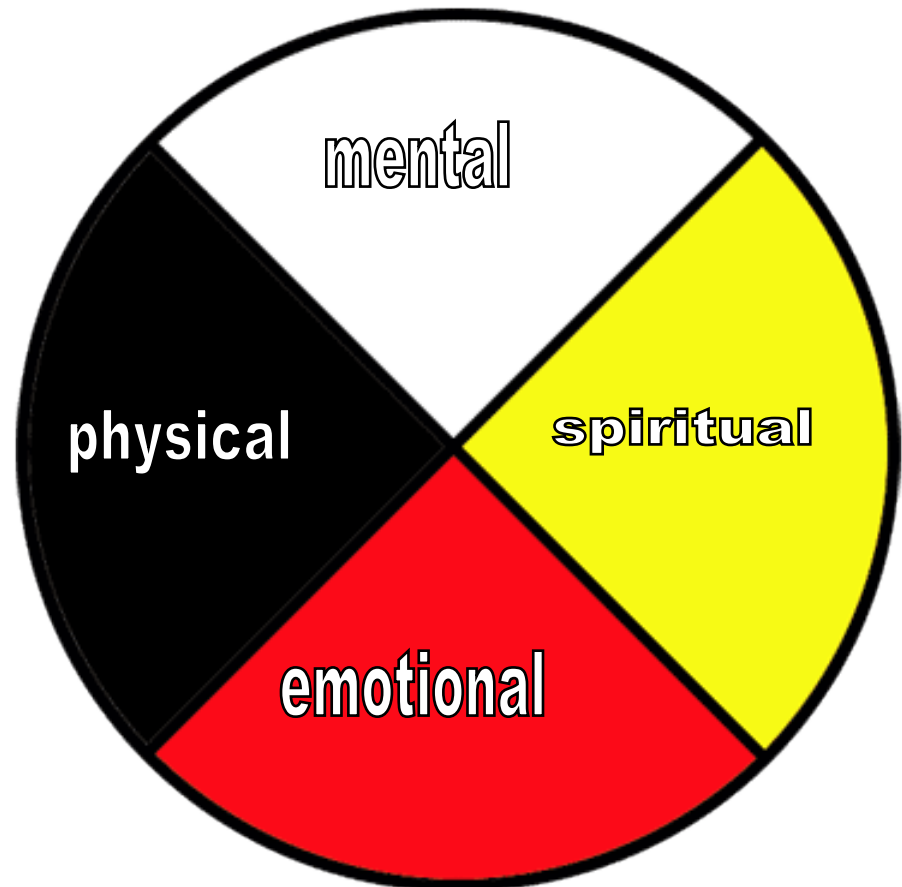
(Aboriginal Healing Foundation)



## Culturally Safety: Holistic Healing

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**Medicine Wheel  
Teaching**







## Cultural Safety: Healing

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**Involves: Individual, family and community**

“It is a development process aimed at achieving balance within oneself, within human relationships and between human beings and the natural and spiritual worlds “

Naho



## Culturally Safety: Practices

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- Go slow approach – get to know the person
- Every one is unique – has a culture, story, their own gifts, strengths and weaknesses
- Walk with the person to wherever – no blind referrals (telling John Doe to go to X agency) - needs support
- Support through good times (stability) and difficult times (crisis, addictions issues, relapse, incarceration, etc.)
- Participate in traditional healing and cultural retreats: ceremony, song and traditional teachings
- Offer a variety of choice for treatment and programs
- Get involved with community development initiatives
- Recognize that it is a slow non linear process



## Culturally Safety: Table Talks

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- Break into 4 groups
- Discuss the questions on your table
- Report back main themes



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**“ We are all part of the solution”**

Thank you